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YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES! FIVE NEW SYMBIOTES VERSUS...
VENOM™
LETHAL PROTECTOR
CAN EVEN SPIDER-MAN® HELP BEAT THE ODDS?!
30 YEARS X-MEN® 1963-1993
BAGLEY DELAROSA.
PART FIVE OF SIX

STAN LEE PRESENTS

VENOM: LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART 5

SYMBIOCIDE

IN A LABORATORY BENEATH CALIFORNIA'S SWELTERING MOJAVE DESERT...
AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE SCREEN BEHIND ME, SPIDER-MAN...
EDDIE BROCK -- BETTER KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS "VENOM"--
--IS QUITE DEAD!

DAVID MICHELINIE WRITER
RON LIM BREAKDOWNS
SAM DELAROSA FINISHES
PARKER & STARKINGS LETTERS
MARIE JAVINS COLORS
DANNY FINGEROTH EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

[redacted]

AND SINCE *HE* WAS YOUR REASON FOR INVADING THE *LIFE FOUNDATION'S* PROPERTY IN THE *FIRST* PLACE--
--THERE'S REALLY NO REASON FOR YOU TO *STAY*!
LOOK, *DRAKE*, I'VE GONE UP AGAINST VENOM A LOT! AND HE'S *NOT* THAT EASY TO KILL! SO IF YOU DON'T MIND--
--I'LL RESERVE JUDGEMENT TILL I CAN SEE FOR *MYSELF*!
ACTUALLY--

--I RATHER *DO* MIND!
MR. DRAKE! I'VE FOUND A *PULSE!* IT'S FAINT, BUT CLEAR!
HE MUST HAVE JUST *PASSED OUT* DUE TO THE TRAUMA OF BEING *SEPARATED* FROM HIS LIVING COSTUME!
TOLD YA!
NYAH-NYAH!
BW
TAKE BROCK TO THE *DISSECTION* LAB. HIS SYMBIOTE COSTUME WILL REMAIN HERE FOR STUDY.
AND *SPIDER-MAN?*
WE'VE BEEN WONDERING WHAT MIGHT MAKE A GOOD FINAL TEST FOR THE "CHILDREN," HAVEN'T WE? WELL...
...I THINK *KILLING* SPIDER-MAN WOULD DO NICELY!

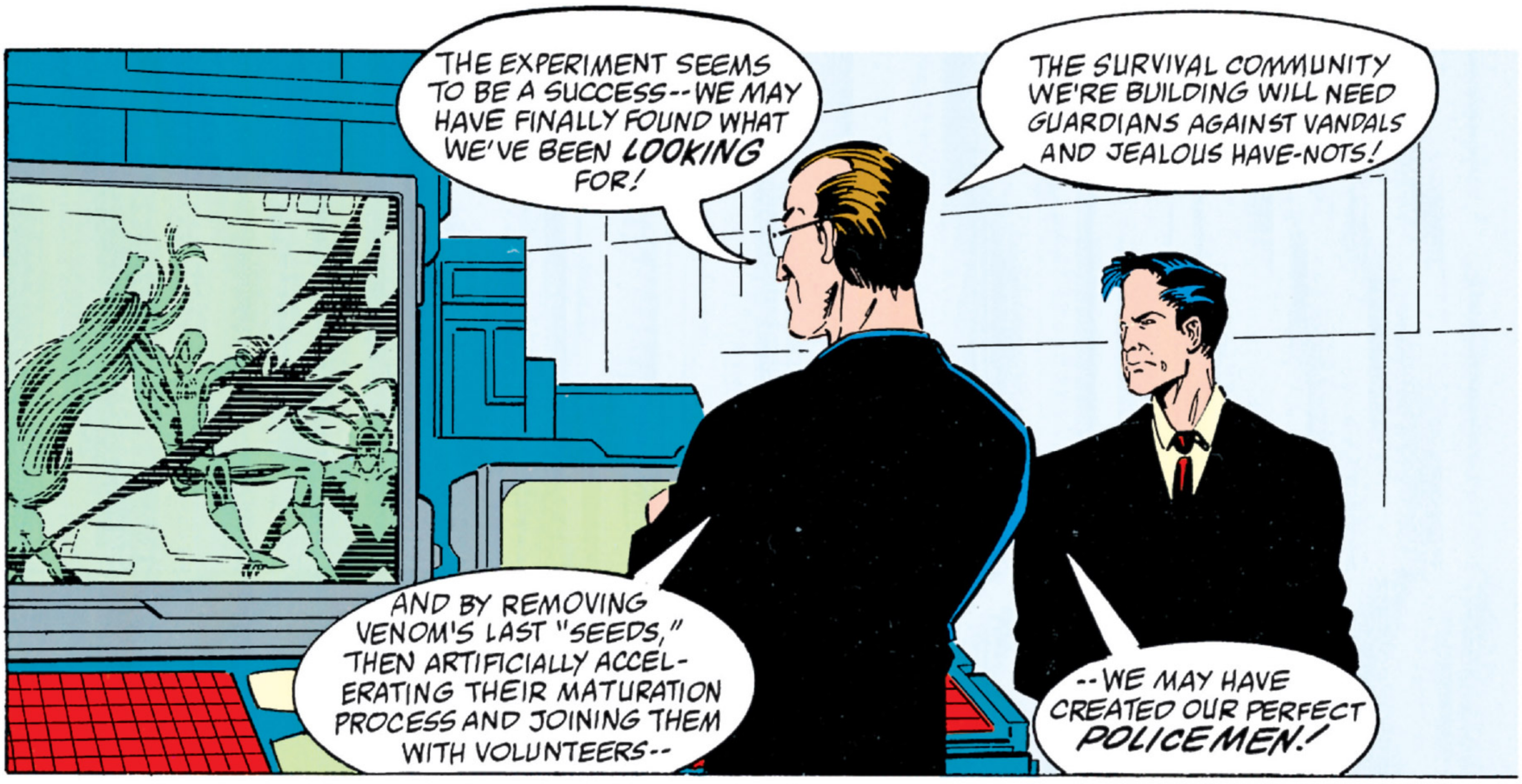
THAT TAKES CARE OF THE GUARDS--BUT WHAT ABOUT EDDIE BROCK?
HE MAY BE ALIVE **NOW**, BUT UNLESS I CAN FIND--
WAIT--!
SPIDER-SENSE TINGLING!
THAT DOOR! THOSE **EYES**!
VENOM?
NO!
gulp
F-F-F-FIVE VENOMS!!!

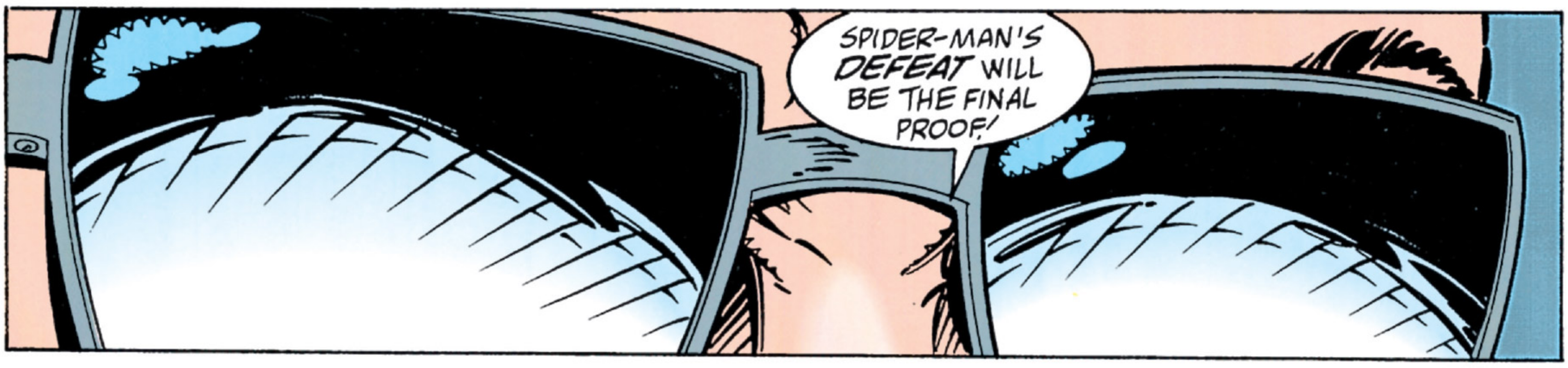
INTERLUDE: SAN FRANCISCO.
PARK CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE CITY
WHERE OLD PROBLEMS TAKE NEW TURNS....!
I'VE SPENT ENOUGH TIME AND MONEY LOOKING FOR THOSE SQUATTERS LIVING BENEATH THE PARK!
YES, SIR, MR. TREECE.
TREECE CONSTRU
THEY STAND BETWEEN ME AND A FORTUNE IN GOLD! THEREFORE--
--THEY'VE GOT TO GO!
I ELIMINATED ONE PROBLEM WHEN I SET THE LIFE FOUNDATION ON VENOM! AND AS FOR THE SQUATTERS, WELL...
...IF I CAN'T FIND THEM, THESE EXPLOSIVES SHOULD REMOVE THEM JUST AS EFFICIENTLY!
WE'D BETTER TELL ETHAN AND THE COUNCIL ABOUT THIS, FAST!
YEAH! I HAVE A FEELING THEY MIGHT REGRET--
--NOT KEEPING THAT BROCK GUY AROUND TO PROTECT US!

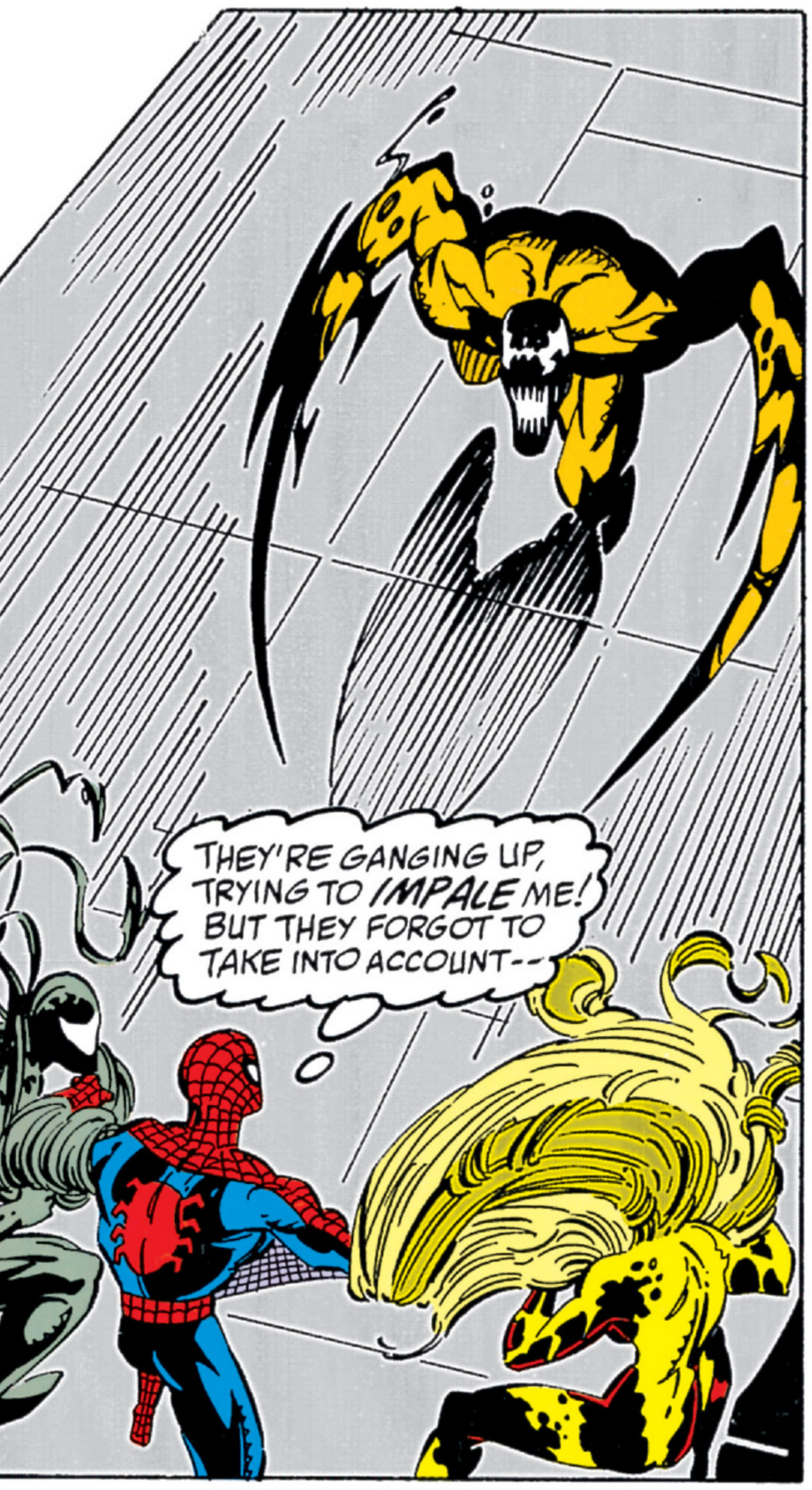
WHILE IN THE MOJAVE...
I'LL LOG BROCK IN ON THE COMPUTER, PAULY--
--YOU ADD SOME MORE RESTRAINING STRAPS.
WHY? THE MUSCLE-BOUND JERK'S STILL SNOOZIN'!
HA! I ALWAYS DID HATE TOUGH GUYS LIKE HIM!
BUT HE WON'T BE SUCH A BIG SHOT AFTER THE DOCS OPEN 'IM UP!
IN FACT, I THINK I'LL STAY AN' WATCH--
--HUH?!!
WATCH THIS!
MY "OTHER" TAUGHT ME TO ENDURE PAIN, TO THROW IT OFF AND RECOVER QUICKLY!
AND I WON'T GIVE YOU TIME TO STRAP ME IN.
GHLK!
YOU SHOULD BE UNCONSCIOUS FOR HOURS BEFORE--

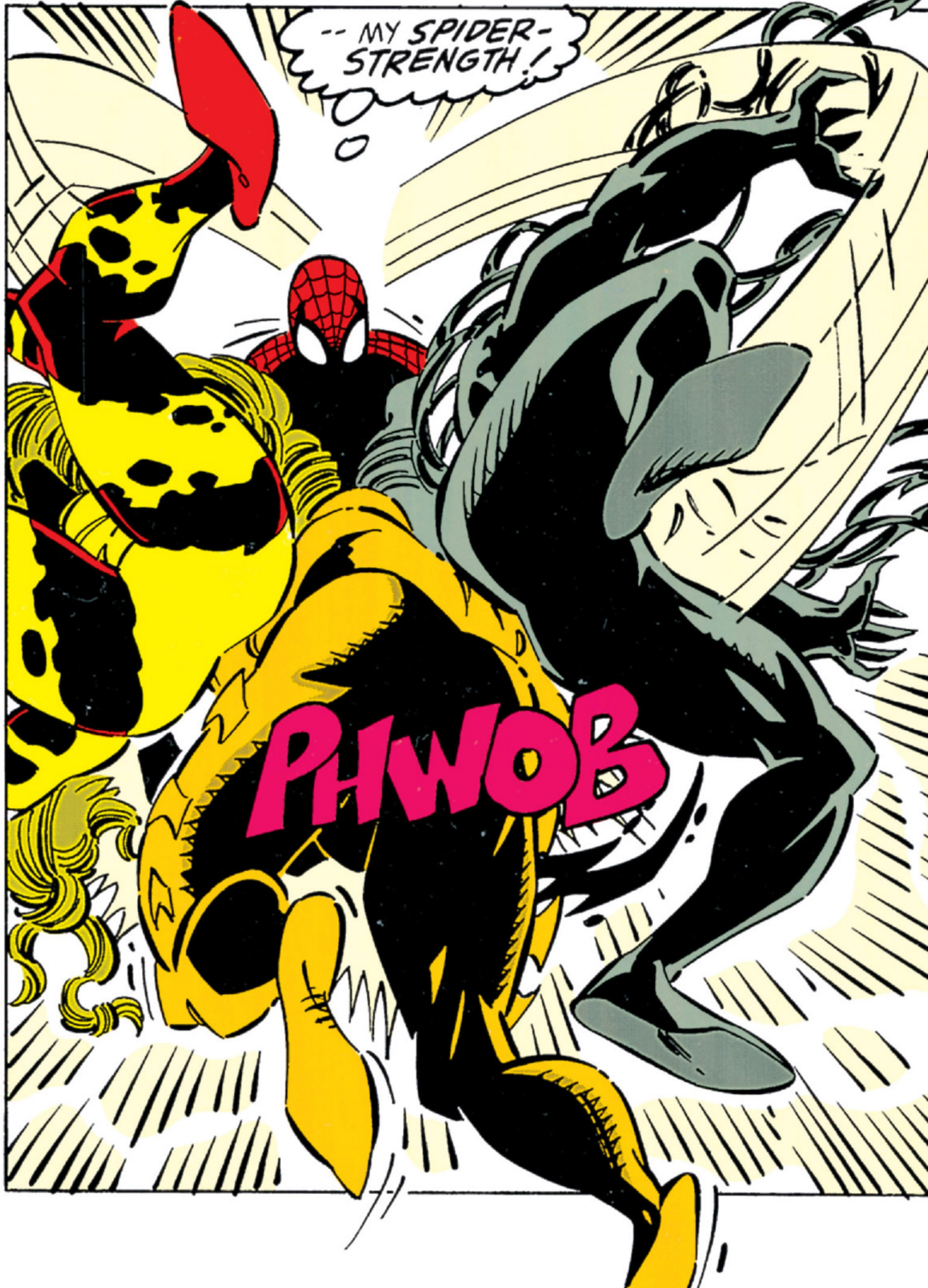
--NO! S-S-SONIC GUN! ARE THOSE BLASTED THINGS EVERYWHERE?
CERTAIN FREQUENCIES... ARE ONE OF THE FEW THINGS... THAT CAN CAUSE MY "OTHER" AGONY!
B-BUT THERE'S SOMETHING... YOU SHOULD KNOW!
WITHOUT MY "OTHER'S" ALIEN FORM... L-LINKED TO MY OWN METABOLISM...
THOSE FREQUENCIES DON'T HURT ME AT ALL!
GOTCHA!

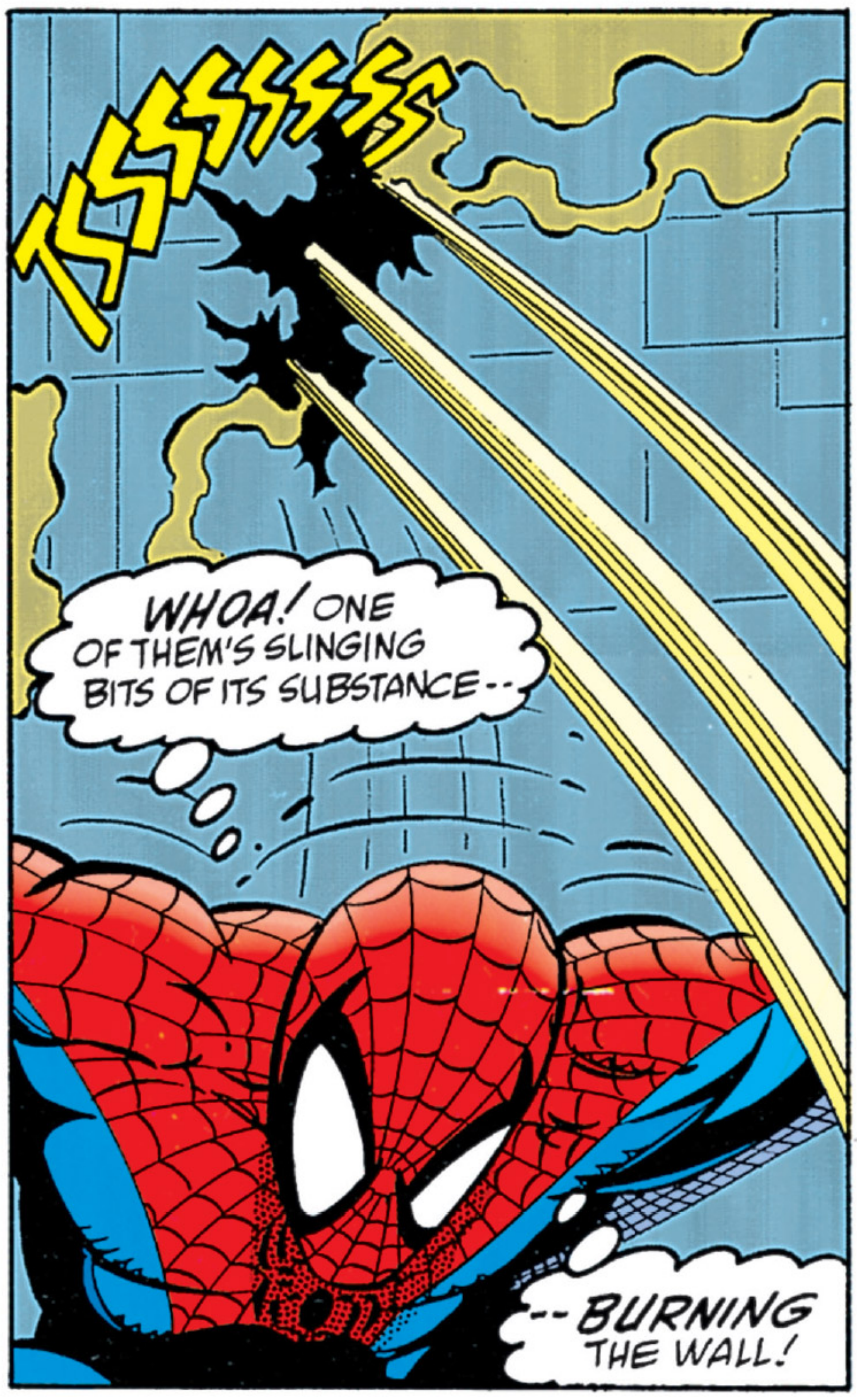
WHILE...
THESE THINGS DON'T TRIGGER MY EARLY-WARNING SPIDER-SENSE!
JUST LIKE VENOM AND...
...CARNAGE?
CARNAGE WAS CREATED WHEN A SPAWN OF VENOM'S COSTUME JOINED WITH A PSYCHOPATHIC SERIAL KILLER!
COULD THESE BE THE RESULT OF OTHER SPAWN?
OH, MAN! FIVE ENEMIES WITH THE POWER OF VENOM AND CARNAGE?
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE STAYED IN NEW YORK...!

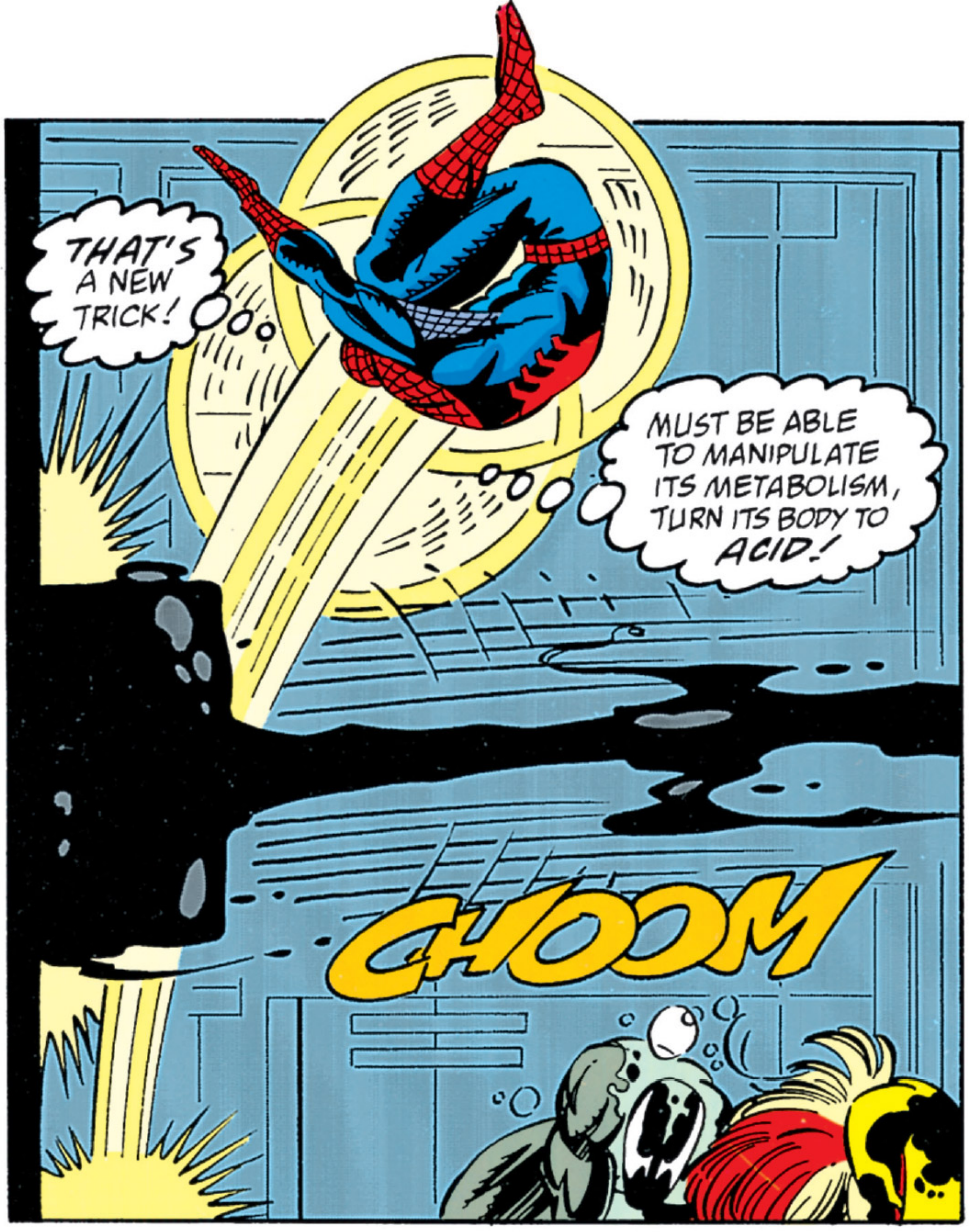

THE EXPERIMENT SEEMS TO BE A SUCCESS--WE MAY HAVE FINALLY FOUND WHAT WE'VE BEEN *LOOKING* FOR!
THE SURVIVAL COMMUNITY WE'RE BUILDING WILL NEED GUARDIANS AGAINST VANDALS AND JEALOUS HAVE-NOTS!
AND BY REMOVING VENOM'S LAST "SEEDS," THEN ARTIFICIALLY ACCELERATING THEIR MATURATION PROCESS AND JOINING THEM WITH VOLUNTEERS--
--WE MAY HAVE CREATED OUR PERFECT *POLICEMEN!*

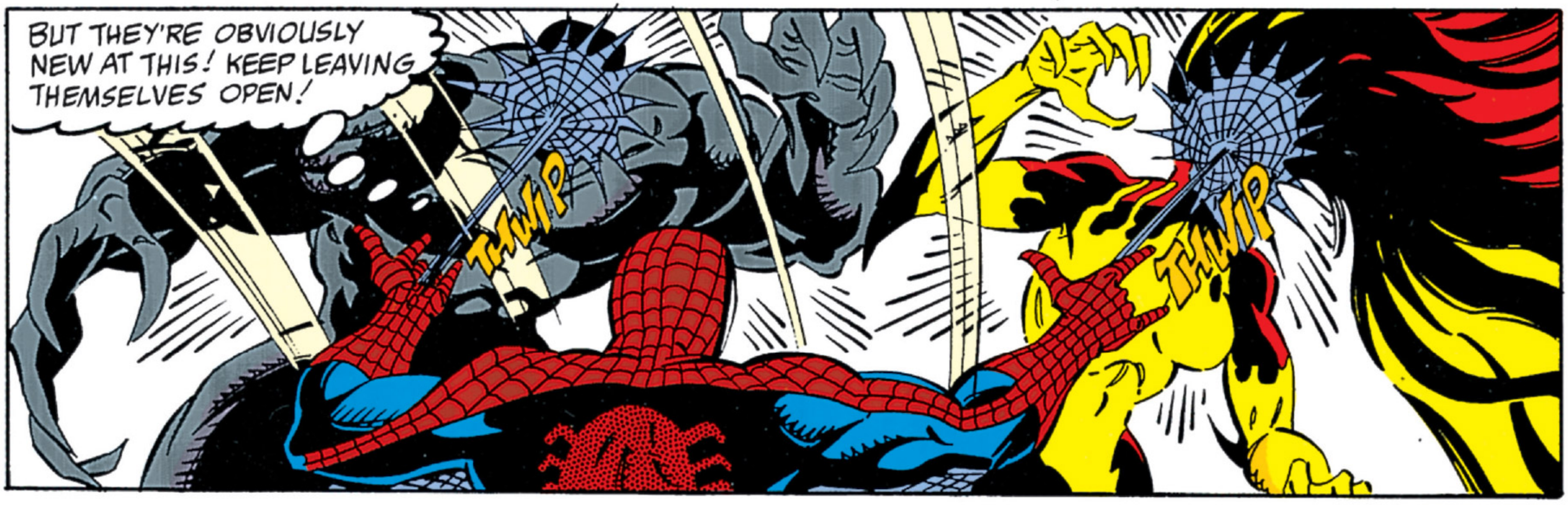

SPIDER-MAN'S *DEFEAT* WILL BE THE FINAL PROOF!

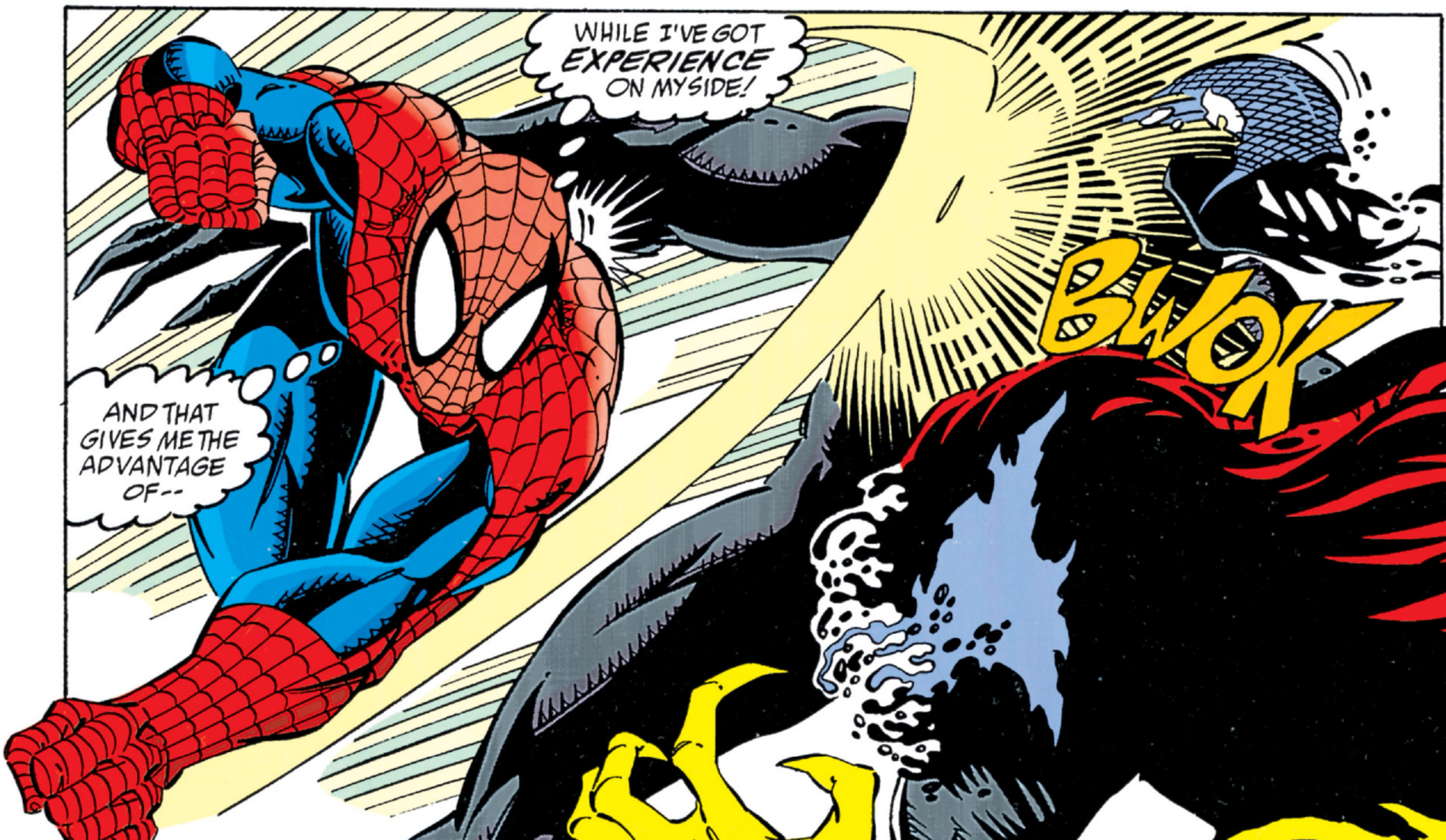

THEY'RE GANGING UP, TRYING TO *IMPALE* ME! BUT THEY FORGOT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT--


-- MY *SPIDER-STRENGTH!*
PHWOB


TSSSSSSSS
WHOA! ONE OF THEM'S SLINGING BITS OF ITS SUBSTANCE--
--BURNING THE WALL!


THAT'S A NEW TRICK!
MUST BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE ITS METABOLISM, TURN ITS BODY TO ACID!
CHOOM


BUT THEY'RE OBVIOUSLY NEW AT THIS! KEEP LEAVING THEMSELVES OPEN!
THWIP
THWIP


WHILE I'VE GOT EXPERIENCE ON MY SIDE!
AND THAT GIVES ME THE ADVANTAGE OF--
BWOK

-- SURPRISE?
SH-SHE ABSORBED MY WEBBING! SPITTING IT OUT LIKE A *FUR-BALL*!
HHHHHHHHK
STOP!
THESE ARE THE OFFSPRING OF MY "OTHER"! BUT THEY HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO *BOND* WITH THEIR HOSTS!
EDDIE? DON'T--!
I MUST! THEY'RE STILL INNOCENT, AND MAY YET BE SAVED!
COME TO ME, CHILDREN! AND TOGETHER WE MAY RIGHT THE WRONGS DONE THIS DAY!
COME TO ME--!
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
THAT... D-DIDN'T GO QUITE AS WELL... AS I'D HOPED...!

WHILE IN A TIME-LOST CITY BENEATH SAN FRANCISCO, NOW A HAVEN FOR THE ONCE-HOMELESS--
WE SAW IT, ETHAN--
-- A WHOLE TRUCKLOAD OF CRATES, ALL LABELED "EXPLOSIVES"!
DIRE NEWS, INDEED.
I KNEW TREECE WOULDN'T BE CONTENT TO LET HIS MECHANICAL DIGGERS KEEP SEARCHING FOR US!
NOW, ELIZABETH--!
HIS PATIENCE IS SPENT! HE'S GOING TO CRUMBLE OUR WORLD AROUND US!
IF ONLY YOU'D LISTENED, LET MR. BROCK STAY! HE WOULD HAVE--
--CORRUPTED US ONE AND ALL! HE'S A MURDERER! A DEMON!
WE WOULD HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED IN OUR SLEEP, AS SURELY AS--
THAT'S ENOUGH REV. RAKESTRAW! ARGUING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WON'T HELP ANYTHING!
WE NEED SOLUTIONS FOR WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW!
SUGGESTIONS?
SILENCE FILLS THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

AS, MANY MILES AWAY...
SUGGESTIONS?
THE DISSECTION LAB!
THE DISSEC--?!
Oh, NEVER MIND.
THWIP
THWIP
I'LL FIND OUT WHEN I GET THERE!
HURRY! I USED TWO WHOLE WEBBING CARTRIDGES TO BLOCK THAT DOORWAY, BUT THEY'RE TEARING THROUGH IT ALREADY!
MY GUARDS DROPPED THESE SONIC GUNS!
THEY'VE PROVED EFFECTIVE AGAINST MY "OTHER" IN THE PAST!
I GET IT!
WE JUST HOPE THERE'S TRUTH IN THAT OLD SAYING..

"-- LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON!
"WELL, OKAY, SONS AND DAUGHTERS!"
GYAAAAAHH!
THAT'S ENOUGH! THERE'S NO NEED TO CAUSE ANY MORE PAIN!
THEY MADE THEIR CHOICE! THEY'RE NO LONGER INNOCENT...!
AND THEY'RE ALSO NO LONGER OUT OF IT!
CHRAK
ONE MUST'VE DUCKED DOWN LET THE OTHERS BLOCK THE SONICS!
THIS WON'T HOLD HIM LONG!
THWIP
WE HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO--

--EDDIE?
YEEESH! WHERE IS HE OFF TO NOW?!
MY "OTHER" IS THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT THE SPAWN-- STRENGTH AGAINST STRENGTH!
GUARD OUR BACKS!
IF ANYONE EVER TOLD ME THAT ONE DAY--
--I'D ACTUALLY BE HELPING EDDIE BROCK JOIN WITH HIS SYMBIOTE...!
NAAAH! I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE IT!
THERE!
IT LIVES!
DID YOU MISS ME?
PLEEP
NO LONGER!
TEK
FOR ONCE AGAIN...AND FOREVER WE ARE--

--VENOM!

FOREVER'S A LONG TIME, CREEP!
THE FIFTH GUARDIAN, THE ONE THAT AVOIDED THE SONICS!
BUT... WHY FIGHT HIM WHEN YOU CAN TRAP HIM? SPIDER-MAN, THAT CONSOLE BEHIND YOU--!
IT CONTROLS THE SOUND CAGE THAT HELD US BEFORE YOU GOT HERE!
ACTIVATE IT, AND WE'LL THROW THIS UPSTART IN!
EASY TO SAY! THESE BUTTONS AREN'T LABELED, JUST NUMBERED!
WHICH ONE DO I PUSH? WHICH--?!
Ahhhhh, NUTS!
TIK
SKREEEEEEE

M-MY COSTUME! SMOLDERING!
R-R-ROTTING AWAY?!?
AAGGH!
YOU HIT THE WRONG CONTROL, STARTED THE MACHINE THAT ARTIFICIALLY MATURED THE ALIEN SPAWN!
LOOKS LIKE IT WORKS ON ADULTS, TOO!
IT AGED PART OF THAT ONE TO THE POINT OF DECAY!
THAT'S IT!
WE'LL WIDEN THE BEAM AND USE IT ON ALL OF THEM, DESTROY THEM BEFORE THEY CAN HARM MORE INNOCENTS!
BUT THAT MIGHT KILL THE HUMANS INSIDE!
THEY PROBABY HAVEN'T BONDED COMPLETELY--THE HOSTS SHOULD SURVIVE!
"PROBABLY"? "SHOULD"?! SORRY, VENOM, WE CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE!
YOU MEAN... YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE!
WHA--?! S-SNAKED A COSTUME TENDRIL ≷GHK≶ AROUND BEHIND ME!
UUUUUUUUUUH...
WE KEPT OUR WORD--WE SWORE WE WOULDN'T KILL YOU.* BUT WE NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT NOT RENDERING YOU UNCONSCIOUS!
*IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #375.--D.

WE WERE A *CAPTIVE AUDIENCE* WHEN SCIENTISTS OPERATED THIS MACHINE.
THERE HE IS!
GET 'IM!
AND WE LEARN *QUICKLY*...!
TIK
TAKATIK
AAHAAAAHGH!
EEEEEEEEEE!!
GYAAAHH!
NO!
NOOOOOO!
THE SYMBIOTES-- NOTHING BUT *DUST!*
THEY'RE *DEAD!* ALL OF THEM!
THAT WAS A DIRTY TRICK, VENOM! I WON'T FORGET IT!
REALLY, SPIDER-MAN! THE *HUMANS* ARE STILL BREATHING, AREN'T THEY?
IS THERE NO *PLEASING* YOU?

BLAST!
SOUND THE EVACUATION ALERT, MR. GOMEZ, AND BEGIN AUTO-DESTRUCT PROCEDURES.
WE'LL HAVE TO VAPORIZE THIS ENTIRE INSTALLATION, ELIMINATE ALL TRACES OF THE LIFE FOUNDATION'S INVOLVEMENT!
THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME THAT MEDDLING WEB-SLINGER HAS COMPROMISED A MAJOR INVESTMENT!
PERHAPS, IN THE FUTURE... WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT!
BREET BREET
UH-OH! I'VE HAD EXPERIENCE WITH THESE GUYS! WHEN THINGS DON'T GO THEIR WAY--
--THEY TEND TO BLOW THINGS UP!
COME ON! I STOWED AWAY ON A 'COPTER TO GET IN HERE, AND I THINK I CAN FIND THE HANGAR AGAIN!
THIS MAY WORK OUT YET! I CAME TO CALIFORNIA TO NAB VENOM!
AND IF I CAN TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE ONCE WE'RE FREE, I CAN TURN HIM OVER TO--
--NO! HE'S NOT BEHIND ME ANYMORE!
THAT SUCKER MAY BE CRAZY... BUT HE'S NOT STUPID!

MOMENTS LATER, A FLEET OF FUTURISTIC FLYING CRAFT RISES INTO THE AIR, WHILE CONVOYS OF LAND VEHICLES SPEED AWAY IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
AND, SHORT SECONDS AFTER THAT...
PHASSSSH
MADE IT!
AND I'D BET MY LEFT WEB-SHOOTER THAT VENOM GOT AWAY, TOO!
WHICH MEANS I'D BETTER MAKE MY WAY BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO.
THIS ISN'T FINISHED YET...!

WHILE BELOW...
E-EXCUSE ME, SIR--
-- D-DID YOU SAY *gulp!* SAN FRANCISCO?
ROLAND TREECE BETRAYED US, SOUGHT TO KEEP US FROM PROTECTING THOSE INNOCENTS AT THE PARK!
HE'S ABOUT TO LEARN HOW BADLY HE FAILED!
YES, DRIVER-- TO SAN FRANCISCO! AND DON'T SPARE THE HORSES!
WE HAVE PLACES TO BE, THINGS TO DO...
... AND ENTRAILS TO DEVOUR!
"LETHAL PROTECTOR" CONCLUDES NEXT ISSUE AS SPIDEY AND VENOM BATTLE TREECE'S FORCES -- AND EACH OTHER!